

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A keyboard adapted for use in connection with an electronic device, comprising:

an elastomeric sheet stretchable in a substantially single plane in at least one linear direction and at least one angular direction between an expanded position and a contracted position; and

a plurality of keycaps arranged on the elastomeric sheet, each keycap corresponding to a respective key of the electronic device, a spacing between adjacent keycaps in the at least one linear direction and the at least one angular direction expandable and contractible in accordance with and proportional to expansion and contraction of the elastomeric sheet between the expanded position of the fabric and the contracted position of the fabric;

wherein the elastomeric sheet in the contracted position is arranged to be substantially entirely received in a housing of the electronic device.

2. The keyboard according to claim 1, wherein each keycap includes an indication of a corresponding numeral.

3. The keyboard according to claim 1, wherein each keycap includes an indication of at least one corresponding alphanumeric character.

4. The keyboard according to claim 1, further comprising a frame including substantially rigid elements extendable and contractible in at least one direction.

5. The keyboard according to claim 4, wherein the substantially rigid elements include a plurality of rigid elements configured to telescope in at least one direction.

6. The keyboard according to claim 4, wherein the substantially rigid elements include a plurality of drawer elements, the drawer elements configured to be received in the housing of the electronic device in a storage position and extendable from the housing of the electronic device into a keyboard data entry position.

7. The keyboard according to claim 5, wherein the rigid elements are substantially tubular.

8. The keyboard according to claim 1, further comprising at least one substantially rigid panel arranged on a side of the elastomeric sheet opposite the keycaps.

9. The keyboard according to claim 1, further comprising a plurality of substantially rigid panels arranged on a side of the elastomeric sheet opposite the keycaps, the panels configured to be stacked in the contracted position of the elastomeric sheet, the panels movable relative to each other in at least one direction in accordance with expansion and contraction of the elastomeric sheet between the expanded position of the elastomeric sheet and the contracted position of the elastomeric sheet.

10. The keyboard according to claim 1, wherein the elastomeric sheet is elastically stretchable in the substantially single plane in one linear direction and one angular direction about an axis perpendicular to the one linear direction.

11. The keyboard according to claim 1, further comprising a connection layer arranged on a side of the elastomeric sheet opposite the keycaps.

12. The keyboard according to claim 1, wherein the keycaps are elastically expandable and contractible in the at least one direction in accordance with and proportional to expansion and contraction of the elastomeric sheet.

13. An electronic device, comprising:

a housing; and

a keyboard including:

an elastomeric sheet elastically stretchable in a substantially single plane in at least one linear direction and at least one angular direction between an expanded position and a contracted position; and

a plurality of keycaps arranged on the elastomeric sheet, each keycap corresponding to a respective key of the electronic device, a spacing between adjacent keycaps in the at least one linear direction and the at least one angular direction expandable and contractible in accordance with and proportional to expansion and contraction of the elastomeric sheet between the expanded position of the elastomeric sheet and the contracted position of the elastomeric sheet;

wherein the elastomeric sheet in the contracted position is arranged to be substantially entirely received in the housing.

14. The electronic device according to claim 13, wherein the elastomeric sheet is elastically stretchable in the substantially single plane in one linear direction and one angular direction about an axis perpendicular to the one linear direction.

15. The electronic device according to claim 13, further comprising an ambient light sensor and a light configured to illuminate the keycaps in the expanded position of the

elastomeric sheet based on an ambient light level determined by the ambient light sensor.

16. The electronic device according to claim 13, wherein each keycap includes an indication of a corresponding numeral.

17. The electronic device according to claim 13, wherein each keycap includes an indication of at least one corresponding alphanumeric character.

18. The electronic device according to claim 13, further comprising a frame including substantially rigid elements extendable and contractible in at least one direction.

19. The electronic device according to claim 18, wherein the substantially rigid elements include a plurality of rigid elements configured to telescope in at least one direction.

20. The electronic device according to claim 18, wherein the substantially rigid elements include a plurality of drawer elements, the drawer elements configured to be received in the housing in a storage position and extendable from the housing into a keyboard entry position.

21. The electronic device according to claim 19, wherein the rigid elements are substantially tubular.

22. The electronic device according to claim 13, further comprising at least one substantially rigid panel arranged on a side of the elastomeric sheet opposite the keycaps.

23. The electronic device according to claim 13, further comprising a plurality of substantially rigid panels arranged on a side of the elastomeric sheet opposite the keycaps, the panels configured to be stacked in the contracted position of

the elastomeric sheet, the panels movable relative to each other in at least one direction in accordance with expansion and contraction of the elastomeric sheet between the expanded position of the elastomeric sheet and the contracted position of the elastomeric sheet.

24. The electronic device according to claim 13, further comprising a connection layer arranged on a side of the elastomeric sheet opposite the keycaps.

25. The electronic device according to claim 13, wherein the electronic device is configured as a wireless telephone.

26. The electronic device according to claim 13, wherein the keycaps are elastically expandable and contractible in the at least one linear direction and the at least one angular direction in accordance with and proportional to expansion and contraction of the elastomeric sheet.

27. An electronic device, comprising:
a housing; and
a keyboard including:

an elastomeric sheet elastically stretchable in a substantially single plane in at least one linear direction and at least one angular direction between an expanded position and a contracted position; and

a plurality of keycaps arranged on the elastomeric sheet, each keycap corresponding to a respective key of the electronic device, a spacing between adjacent keycaps in the at least one linear direction and the at least one angular direction expandable and contractible in accordance with and proportional to expansion and contraction of the elastomeric sheet between the expanded position of the elastomeric sheet and the contracted position of the elastomeric sheet;

wherein the elastomeric sheet in the contracted position has a width and a length in the substantially single plane not greater than a width and a length of the housing.